

the like; and all this on Purpose to enable themselves either to answer our Question *WHAT NEWS?* or to gratify their own or their Friend's impertinent Curiosity; thus they often make a Breach between the most intimate Friends, whose good Understanding they before envied and would fain destroy; and how happy do some account themselves in Store of such Kind of Observations, which to be sure shall lose nothing in their communicating them to others. And if a loud Whisper will recommend any Thing of this Nature, and make it fly further, by Way of a Secret, then it is disclosed with much seeming Caution, and as a Thing *they would not wish to hear again for the World*; nor would they have mentioned it, but in Answer to that important Question *WHAT NEWS?* This is a Character so base and infamous, that we cannot but detest it, altho' not touch'd by it; and even those very Persons, whose present Interest it may seem to promote, however they may like the *Sound*, never fail to hate the *Sounder*.

*WHAT NEWS?* is also an ill-timed Question, to such as are over fond of reporting News; a Fondness to tell of the News one hears is, in good Company, a most nauseous Piece of Impertinence. *Barren Wits* and *Common-place Talkers* commonly slide into this Error, being incapable of thinking to the Purpose, or furnishing a Stock from their own sterile Fancies fit for Conversation. I am sorry to say, that some of the *Fair Sex* have an unlucky Talent this Way; many of those intelligent Females have a Store of such Stuff in Reserve, to entertain all Companies; they are proud of being taken Notice of by Persons who have got itching Ears, and whose pretended Esteem for them is nothing at Bottom but an impertinent Curiosity; so that if their rattling Informers could impartially discern, they would find that they courted their Conversation only to make them *Tools of Ridicule*. But it matters not, tho' sometimes upon serious Thoughts, and retiring into themselves, they may have a Glimpse of their own Folly; yet their *Gossips*, thro' a continued Habit, get such a riveted Turn this Way, that they can never shake it off; and no sooner are they placed in Company, than they presently open their Budget, and without staying for our Question *WHAT NEWS?* give you all the idle News of the Place, when perhaps you are unwilling to hear them.

SOME Dealers in News expose their Ignorance, by going beyond their Knowledge in *History*, *Geography*, and *Politics*; they will mistake the Situation and *Topography* of Places, the Names and Characters of eminent persons, the Time and Circumstances of remarkable Actions; but these are generally the most innocent Dealers in News, and only expose themselves by showing their Ignorance, when they aim at being thought very knowing and learned. But the worst of *News-Tellers* are, such as take Pleasure in promulgating *bad News*, whether relating to private Persons or public Transactions; we ought therefore, when the Question *WHAT NEWS?* is put to us, to be very cautious how we give such a Reply as may affect our Neighbour, either in his Character or Estate, in a private Capacity; or may hurt the public Constitution, by spreading ill-grounded Reports of bad Successes, which may dispirit or dishearten the People: If a Man cannot dispense with the Pleasure of making his Hearers gape and stare, he may fall upon more innocent Subjects of Discourse to produce this Effect.

BUT to return once more to our Question, *WHAT NEWS?* how shall a prudent Man behave, when this Question is often started to him? his own Sense and Discretion will direct him: But what Advice shall we give the loquacious Fool? Let him answer as a Friend of mine, used to do, when thus accosted;

— Sir, or Madam, the *News-paper* comes out upon Friday or Saturday, that will inform you best. Or Indeed I have no In-

no News, and my Invention is not acute enough to coin any. Or, in fine, he may answer as a certain *Humorist* of my Acquaintance did, when any Body asked him *WHAT NEWS?* he replied, That if his Judgment of the Weather failed not, we should have Rain in less than two Days; or, that he proposed to dine with his Friend Mr. Such a one: And if very much pressed with the Repetition of the Question, he would resolve all into this Scriptural Apophthegm, That There was no new Thing under the Sun, and therefore, in a literal Sense, No News.

To conclude, Sir, if this Sermon to some of your Readers should seem too long, for so short and trifling a Text as *WHAT NEWS?* let it be remembered, that the Church Doors stand wide open, and if they like it not, they may without Ceremony walk out, and leave both the Preacher and his Discourse, at whatever Period they please. I am, Sir, Your's, &c.

Dated at VVXYZ,

KL MN PQRS, & +.

the 30th of the 10th

Month, the 2d Day

of the Week.

Extract from the Votes of the General Assembly of New-York, Die Mercurii, November 20, 1745.

A Message from his Excellency by Mr. Catharwood; which being read, is in the Words following, viz.

Gentlemen,

I. All Night I received a Letter from the Commissioners for Indian Affairs at Albany, by Express, dated the 17th Instant, acquainting me, That the Night before, the Enemy had cut off Saraghtoga Settlement, upon our Northern Frontiers; that only one Family has escaped the Destruction by Flight; that they saw the Fort and some other Buildings in Flames.

Of such like Misfortunes I have given you repeated Warnings; and as to what Heed you have given to them, I leave to your own serious Reflection: The World will judge of it; and as the Commissioner's Letter (which I herewith lay before you) intimates, it is amazing that the Necessity of building some fortifications for the Protection of our Northern Frontiers (which I have so often urged) should have had no better Effect with you; and I must say, as the Commissioners do, the like was never known, that one Part of a Government should be left to be butchered by the Enemy, without Assistance from the other.

As these Settlements, at the Distance only of between 30 and 40 Miles from Albany, are destroyed, the High Road is now cleared from Crown Point, to that City; and I find it absolutely necessary to make immediate Detachments of the Militia from the neighbouring Counties, and other Parts of the Province, to its Protection against the Insults of the Enemy; for whose Subsistence, it is incumbent on you to make ample Provision with the utmost Dispatch, as likewise for the erecting a proper Fort at the Carrying place; which (as Affairs have hitherto been conducted) I find is likely to be postponed as a Matter not deserving your Attention at this Conjunction; and another for the Protection of the Settlements in the Neighbourhood of those which have been destroyed, and for the Maintenance of such Numbers of Men as will be necessary to guard them whilst building; and unless such Forts are built, it will be impracticable to send Out-Scouts to watch the Motions of the Enemy, when they have no Place of Safety to resort to upon Occasion.

I cannot now hesitate about engaging the Six Nations of Indians in the War: You may have observed by the last Treaty